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DEMOCRATIC
GERMAN REPORT

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PENSIONS UPPED

Living Standard Soars in Democratic Germany

All pensions in the German Democratic Republic were increased by an average of 10% on May 1st. About three million old-age pensioners, disability pensioners, widows and orphans benefited from the rise.

It was stressed in Berlin that the pension increase would mean a genuine increase in the standard of living of all pensioners, since prices in Democratic Germany are stable and falling. The pension increase could not be compared to similar increases demanded in capitalist countries which, if granted, could only help to ease the strain of rising prices.

The big pension rise meant that a total of well over five million people in the German Democratic Republic — nearly one-third of the population — were now getting more money than at the beginning of 1959. Earlier this year wage increases, also averaging ten percent, were granted to two-and-a-quarter million workers in lower-paid categories. They included shop assistants, post office employees, health service workers, and workers in light industry and the food industry.

Statistics on the steady rise in the standard of living issued on April 23rd by the Politburo of the Socialist Unity Party showed that in the past twelve months, pay and pension increases coupled with price reductions had increased the real income of the population of Democratic Germany by an annual sum of 5360 million marks.

This sum represents more than 300 marks per year (over £25) for every man, woman and child in the German Democratic Republic.

The Politburo statement contrasted this to the situation in West Germany where many industries have gone over to short-time working, and where prices are steadily rising.

LABOUR M.P.s WRITE BRANDT

On April 23rd, eight British Labour M.P.s addressed a letter to Herr Willi Brandt, Social Democratic Mayor of West Berlin, who had just concluded a visit to Britain. Here is the full text of the letter:

On your visit here you were doubtless surrounded by VIPs, some of whom talked in terms of their readiness to plunge the world into atomic war rather than "give way" over Berlin, that is to say, to agree to any change in the existing situation. We who write this letter are merely back-bench M.P.s, but we believe we know the feelings of our constituents and are more closely in touch with public opinion than some of those you may have met.

Our purpose in writing, therefore, is to beg you not to be taken in by the vicarious bellicosity of certain circles nor by the capitalist press. We beg you to ponder on the Gallup Poll published in the "News Chronicle" on April 21st, according to which only 11% of British and 13% of West German opinion "would favour the West remaining in Berlin if it means a nuclear war", as compared with 24% in Britain and 31% in West Germany who favour a withdrawal from Berlin. Not less than 53% in America, 47% in Britain, and 46% in Germany want the whole matter dealt with through the United Nations.

These facts add up to an overwhelming demand by British, West German and American opinion that the Berlin issue should be settled by negotiation and compromise, and to a resolute determination not to be tricked into war in defence of the status quo in Berlin. This state of mind corresponds to a widespread realisation that the Berlin situation is in fact anomalous and dangerous, and must be ended in one way or another.

Either it will be ended by agreement, or else the Soviet Government will end it by a peace treaty with East Germany, resulting in the East German Government being recognised by many states as a sovereign state. If the latter happens, the status quo will have been changed unilaterally to the detri-

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ment of the western position and prestige, not least in West Berlin. Rather than be faced with the choice between a first-class diplomatic defeat or starting a nuclear war, we believe that the Western Powers should seriously try compromise and negotiations. The kind of compromise which the British people and, we believe, the majority of the German people, want, is a policy of disengagement on the lines proposed by the British Labour Party and also in the plan of the German Social Democratic Party. Our plan and theirs have so much in common with the Polish Rapacki Plan and with proposals made by the Soviet Government that there is no doubt that an agreed basis for negotiation and eventual settlement could be found along these lines.

If the Western Powers used their bloc at the Foreign Ministers' Conference by rejecting all ideas of disengagement and insisting that a united Germany must be free to join NATO, that would make them responsible for the breakdown of negotiations and the threat of nuclear war, and they will be held so responsible by their own peoples.

We therefore venture to suggest, Comrade Brandt, that you point out these facts to all those whom you met, and urge them to accept the proposals of the German SPD and British Labour as bases for negotiation. In so doing we believe you would be serving the cause of the people of West Berlin, not to mention the cause of world peace, better than by giving any encouragement to the delusion that the West can maintain the status quo indefinitely by simply standing pat and by the threat of nuclear war.

With fraternal greetings,

Konni Zilliacus, Sydney Silverman, Stephen Swingler, Julius Silverman, William Warbey, William Griffiths, Emrys Hughes, Tudor Watkins.

Soviet Notes Warn on Nuclear Arms

In notes addressed to the United States and West Germany on April 22nd the Soviet Union protested against steps being taken to equip the West German Wehrmacht with atomic weapons on the eve of the Geneva Conference. In identical passages in the two notes the Soviet Government gave the following warning:

"The Soviet Government regards the nuclear rearmament of the German Federal Republic as an illegal action, and protests against it. The Soviet Government reserves the right, as a party which fought nazi Germany and signed the military surrender act and the declaration on the defeat of Germany, to draw appropriate conclusions with regard to West Germany."

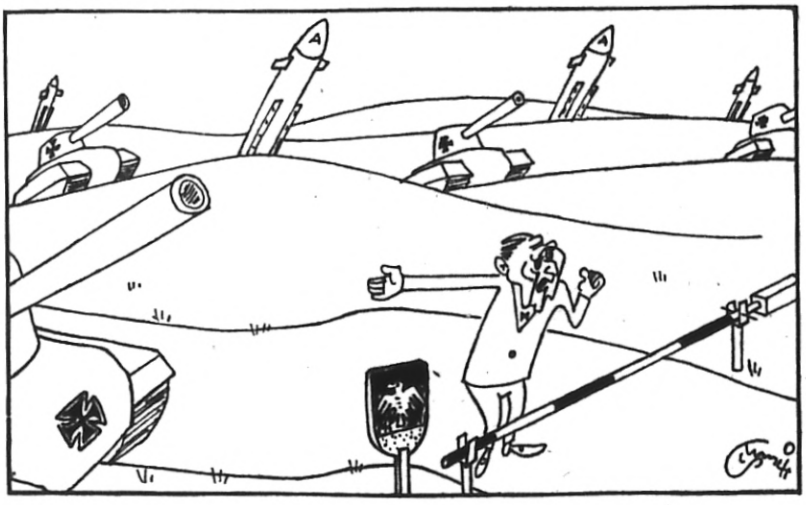
The Soviet Note to West Germany detailed some of the evidence for the nuclear armament of West Germany:

"How far the preparations have gone is shown by the present visit to the United States of Franz Josef Strauss, War Minister of the German Federal Republic. According to press reports this journey has the aim of reaching agreement between the two Governments on practical measures for the armament of West Germany with nuclear and rocket weapons, and preparing the final cancellation of the arms limitations still imposed upon the Federal Republic.

"In addition it is public knowledge that hundreds of members of the Bundeswehr (West German army) are in the United States for special training in the handling of rocket weapons. General Roettiger, West German Army Inspector, has informed the press that the first rocket units have already been established in the German Federal Republic in the province of Hesse."

The Soviet Note to the United States, which was couched in similar terms, stated:

"Now that the Governments of the United States, Britain and France, as well as the Government of the German Federal Republic, have announced their consent to consider the question of a peace treaty with Germany at the coming talks, the measures for the nuclear rearmament of the German Federal Republic cannot be regarded as anything but an attempt to wreck the talks in advance."



Adenauer: "Why all this talk about a German Confederation? I have made all preparations to unify Germany my way."

("Berliner Zeitung", East Berlin)

Early Deadline

As a result of a concentration of public holidays (May Day, Ascension Day on May 7th, Liberation Day on May 8th) this number of GERMAN REPORT had to go to press earlier than usual.

NAZI ADVISER FOR GENEVA

The names of the West German Government delegation to the Foreign Ministers' Conference in Geneva had not been published when this issue of GERMAN REPORT went to press, but messages from Bonn suggested that Professor Wilhelm Grewe, West German Ambassador to the USA, was likely to be a prominent member of the delegation.

Professor Wilhelm Grewe, like the majority of West German diplomats, was a supporter of the nazi regime in Germany, and during the Second World War he held a professorship at the nazi "College for Politics" in Berlin. In the "Zeitschrift fuer Politik", 1942, page 202, he expressed his nazi sympathies quite openly:

"National Socialist and folkish feeling for law form the inalienable basis for all philosophical thinking."

An extract from another article by Professor Grewe is reproduced on this page. In this article in the "Monthly for Foreign Policy" dated September 1941, Grewe stated:

"Nobody will wish to claim that the decision of June 22nd (German

Monatshefte
für Auswärtige Politik
Deutschen Institut für Außenpolitische Forschung, Berlin
stehen. Niemand wird behaupten wollen, daß die Entscheidung des 22. Juni nicht aus sehr realen Erwägungen erwachsen sei. Nach aller geschichtlichen Erfahrung pflegen große weltgeschichtliche Missionen, die nicht im Stadium der Utopie und der unverbindlichen Planung steckenbleiben, in solcher Weise ihren Anfang zu nehmen. Daß der große übernationale Auftrag, den es hier zu vollstrecken gilt, gleichwohl weithin verstanden worden ist beweisen die Expeditions- und Freikorps aus nahezu allen Ländern Europas, die an der Front im Osten stehen.

invasion of the Soviet Union, trans.) was not taken on very real grounds. The experience of history shows that all great world-historic missions, which do not bog down in the stage of utopias and indefinite planning, tend to start in such a manner. The expeditionary corps and the free corps from nearly every country in Europe which are at the eastern front (quisling soldiers of the Waffen SS, trans.) show that the great supranational task which has to be done here is also understood far and wide."

After the war Professor Grewe showed no indication that he had changed his point of view. In October 1946 he was main lecturer at a jurists' discussion in Stuttgart on the subject of the Nuremberg War Crimes Trial. In this lecture he stated:

"The victors are not entitled to sit in judgement upon the defeated ... The accused should not be punished, because the acts were not punishable at the time of their commission."

(Footnote: The delegation of the German Democratic Republic to the Geneva Conference is exclusively composed of persons with anti-nazi records. Details were given in the issue of GERMAN REPORT dated April 24th.)

Adenauer Aide Jailed For Slander

Herbert Blankenhorn, West German Ambassador to Paris and to NATO HQ, was found guilty of slander by a West German court on April 22nd and given a suspended sentence of four months imprisonment.

Blankenhorn, who has been one of Chancellor Adenauer's closest associates, was found by the court to have slandered a leading official of the Ministry of Economics. The offense was committed in 1952, but Adenauer managed to delay the trial until this year. Before the trial began, an official government spokesman stated that the West German cabinet was convinced that Blankenhorn was "only doing his duty" in uttering the slander.

Even after the conviction, Blankenhorn was not relieved of his post, but was merely sent on extensive leave.

His co-accused, Professor Walter Hallstein, another Adenauer aide who is today President of the European Common Market Commission, was acquitted for lack of evidence, but ordered to pay costs. He immediately returned to his post in Brussels.

Both Blankenhorn and Hallstein have nazi records, in common with the majority of leading West German diplomats. Blankenhorn was a member of Hitler's storm troops, and was deported from Switzerland on espionage charges at the end of the war. Professor Hallstein lectured in law at nazi universities, and was a prominent legal adviser to the nazi Ministry of Justice. In March 1952 he hit the headlines for calling for the "integration of Europe up to the Urals".

Anti-Fascist Veterans Honoured

Ludwig Renn, one of the most prominent living German writers, celebrated his 70th birthday in the German Democratic Republic on April 22nd. Ludwig Renn served as an officer in the First World War, and became world-famous in 1928 with the publication of his anti-militarist book "War" which was translated into dozens of languages.

Arrested after Hitler came to power, he later made his way to Spain, where he played a prominent part as officer of the International Brigades. Since the overthrow of nazism he has been living and working in the German Democratic Republic. On his 70th birthday he was honoured by the Government of the German Democratic Republic with the award of the "Fatherland Medal in Gold".

On April 27th Otto Buchwitz, veteran German Socialist, celebrated his 80th birthday. Otto Buchwitz, who has been a member of the Central Committee of the Socialist Unity Party since the Social Democrats and Communists amalgamated to form this party in 1946, joined the Social Democratic Party in 1898. During the Weimar Republic he served as Social Democratic member of the Reichstag. Under Hitler he was sentenced to a long term of hard labour. After the war he became chairman of the Social Democratic Party in Saxony, and played a large part in bringing about the fusion of the two working-class parties in East Germany.

HANDEL IN HALLE

By Mary Wolfard

There was a horrible pun going round Halle. Why was Handel so fond of the Hallelujah Chorus? You can guess the inevitable answer.

For nine days, from April 11th to 19th, Handel took over his native town. Black placards with Handel's head picked out in yellow gazed upon the stream of visitors from home and abroad who were in this pleasant old town for the two hundredth anniversary of his death. And their stay was certainly worthwhile as Handel celebrations on this scale have never been mounted before, anywhere.

Let me give you some idea of the scope of this festival. Four Handel operas und four oratorios were performed. These were *The Triumph of Time and Truth, Admeto, Judas Maccabeus, Belshazzar, Giulio Cesare*, the *Messiah, Ariodante* and *Poro*. The most brilliant performances to my mind were *Belshazzar* and the *Messiah* as performed by the Radio Berlin Symphony Orchestra and Chorus, conducted by Helmut Koch. The choral work, which is his forte, was remarkable both for precision and feeling.

There was also a performance of a modern oratorio, the *Mansfeld Oratorio* by Ernst Hermann Meyer, which deals with the past and present of the copper miners in nearby Mansfeld. It was put on at this festival to show that Handel's oratorio form is not dead but can be used today for contemporary themes. It is, as Handel of course knew, ideally suited to amateur groups because of the simplicity of the staging.

Apart from these major productions, there were some dozen minor concerts given by artists from France, Italy, Britain, the USSR and, of course, the German Democratic Republic. The greatest ovation, I think, went to the Deller Sextet of Britain. This group of singers gave a programme of English and Italian madrigals and motets. Their harmony and purity was something that went through to the heart. As Helène Boschi, the celebrated French pianist told me, she was more moved by this performance than by any of the other chamber music concerts.

This is a very inadequate picture of the wonderful series of concerts given at this festival. Perhaps I can fill it out a bit by giving you an example of a typical festival day. On Wednesday, April 15th, the first concert started at 9 am in the university auditorium. This, by the way, is the university Handel visited as a law student. Thurston Dart, the well-known Cambridge harpsichordist, was the soloist. He played some works by Handel, and less known here, Purcell's *Scottish Suite* where he introduces the old traditional air *Lillibulero*. This concert was immediately followed by a series of lectures by musicologists from various countries including both Dr. Percy Young, the Handel authority, and Alan Bush of Britain. The general theme was Handel's change-over from opera to oratorio.

These finished shortly after one, so we just had time to rush to the hotel for lunch and musical gossip and to get to another university auditorium by 2 o'clock where Michail Vaiman, a great violinist from Leningrad, gave a recital accompanied by Maria Karandashova, also of Leningrad. They gave a programme of sonatas by Handel, Beethoven and Prokofiev. I had a chat with him afterwards and he was full of enthusiasm for the festival. From the Vaiman recital we went to an international forum where public figures answered questions from musicians and visitors from abroad on anything connected with the coming Foreign Ministers' Conference and the peace treaty which we hope will soon be signed. You may think it strange to have a forum on such a theme in the middle of a music festival but I can assure you that very few of the foreign visitors knew anything about Democratic Germany and the problems facing us, and many were keen to put questions on non-musical matters. Musicians are of course very much aware of the universal quality of music, and as they mingled here together, all east-west barriers completely down, even the most politically reactionary paid tribute to the generosity of the socialist countries in the cultural sphere and were very conscious of the contrast between conditions here and, as some of them put it, the miserly attitude of the western governments. And like all of us, they do not want war and do want Geneva to succeed. After the forum we got to the civic theatre just in time for a performance of *Giulio Cesare* presented by the soloists, choir, ballet and orchestra of the Halle County Theatre. It is part of their normal repertoire but it was the first time that many of the foreign guests had seen this opera. And as the London *Times* correspondent said, "Halle proves that Handel could write opera".

And now for a couple of official events. On April 14th, the actual bicentenary of Handel's death, wreaths were laid at the foot of the Handel statue which was unveiled exactly one hundred years ago. The ceremony opened with the strains of the *Fireworks Music* played on wind instruments high up on the tower of the cathedral which dominates the market place. Then a column of hundreds of people slowly moved forward in the hot sunshine to place the wreaths in a growing pile at the base of the statue. The column was made up of distinguished people from the musical world, of soldiers from the People's Army, of young Pioneers and youth groups, but the great majority were the ordinary workers of Halle. They were watched by a dense crowd of thousands including intrepid individuals clinging to every climbable object in the large market place. Then followed tributes in various languages and the choirs.

In the afternoon, Prime Minister Otto Grotewohl came down from Berlin to deliver a most interesting speech on Handel at the civic theatre. The day finished with a state gala performance of *Belshazzar's Feast* and a really most enjoyable reception given by the Minister of Culture Alexander Abusch, where speeches were kept to a minimum and talk flourished.

Perhaps I can't do better than to leave the summing up to John Francis, the leading British flautist who said the festival was "marvellous. Of course I know that there's still a shortage of some things in the GDR. But of the important things, the musical and cultural things, you have abundance. And that's what counts with me."

Korean President in Democratic Germany

Zoi En Gen, head of state of the Korean People's Democratic Republic, completed a six-day visit to the German Democratic Republic on April 24th. An official communique issued at the end of the visit stressed the full agreement of the two governments on all aspects of international politics.

10 YEARS OF BRECHT THEATRE

Berliner Ensemble Still Going Strong

By Victor Gross

After buying a last-minute ticket for a performance at the "Schiffbauerdamm" Theatre in Berlin the other week, I was surprised on entering to find almost all the seats already full. On the lighted stage women, not in costume, were being presented with flowers and books. Had I somehow arrived at the end of the show? No, a glance at my watch showed me that it was fifteen minutes before curtain time — a time when theatres are never full. The lady in the next seat explained to me what was happening. This performance was a special show for a factory in Berlin, which was also celebrating "Women's Day" — the flowers, books and bonuses were for women workers who had shown great initiative or otherwise distinguished themselves in the plant. After this short ceremony and a shorter pause the lights dimmed and the curtain rose, fittingly enough, for a performance of Bertolt Brecht's adaptation of Gorki's "Mother", with the playwright's widow Helene Weigel in the starring role.

This was no exceptional event, for all theatres in Democratic Germany have large blocks of tickets and often whole performances reserved for the factories in their cities and counties. This is especially symbolic for the "Berliner Ensemble" which plays in the "Schiffbauerdamm" Theatre, however, since this is certainly the main audience for whom Brecht wrote his many world-famous plays. The theatre audience is generally also packed with students and intellectual visitors, not only from East but also in large numbers from West Berlin. Many of them are devoted, even fanatical devotees of the great writer who died on August 14th 1956.

The Berliner Ensemble, which has about 200 permanent members, including more than 50 actors, was founded by Brecht after his return to Germany in 1948, after his long exile from nazism which took him to Austria, Scandinavia and then Hollywood. Brecht and the Ensemble began in a borrowed theatre in January 1949 with a production of his play "Mother Courage and her Children". This play, laid in Europe during the Thirty Years War but contemporary in its anti-military message, is still playing in Berlin today, still featuring Helene Weigel and Ernst Busch and still so popular that it is difficult to get seats, after 370 performances, usually once every week or two.

The repertoire of the Berliner Ensemble, which after Brecht's death has continued with much the same cast under its star-actress Helene Weigel, at present includes eight of his plays in its programme, together with two by other authors (Synge's "Playboy of the the Western World" and Vishnevsky's "Optimistic Tragedy"). It is, of course, largely the Brecht plays which have made the theatre famous and which it has taken on tour to many cities in East and West Germany and to London, Moscow, Paris, Prague, Warsaw, Leningrad and Vienna.

Every visit to the purposely rather old-fashioned theatre in the centre of Berlin is a treat, but never a candy-and-cake sort of saccharine treat. The visitor has to do some thinking when he goes there — for Bertolt Brecht was always against plays which caught the audience up in their own emotions to such an extent that they never felt the need or opportunity to do any reflecting. Naturalistic settings with lots of tiny details are tabu — the stage is set simply with only the necessary requisites; the

Helene Weigel as "Mother Courage"

scenery is often let down on strings from above and ample use is made of lantern slides, often to summarise the content and hint at the meaning of the coming scene. The plot is often interrupted by the rather unmelodious, but meaningful and interesting songs which the actors sing directly to the audience to illustrate various points of the play. (The most famous of these is probably "Mack the Knife" from the play and film "Threepeny Opera" — a song with music by Kurt Weill which is still a hit tune a generation after its composition.)

All of these methods, which also include masks (in the "Caucasian Circle of Chalk") and other devices, serve to keep the audience on its toes, so to speak. What is being said here? What is the meaning for me? And there is such a wealth of ideas in the plays that one is never disappointed.

Another reason why the plays are a treat is their language — a rich meaty prose style with a broad streak of slang and ribald humour. Indeed, humour is one of Brecht's main tools and weapons. There's really never a dull moment!

And of course, there are the actors — and because the Berliner Ensemble is a repertoire theatre where the actors know each other completely, there is a collective workmanship which equals the best theatres anywhere in the world. The most famous of the group are the two I have already mentioned — Helene Weigel with her strong, expressive face and sharp voice — and Ernst Busch, who is known to many outside Germany for his steely, ironically biting voice in the songs he recorded during the Spanish Civil War in a studio under bombing attack.

Helene Weigel's best role is in "Mother Courage and her Children"; laid in the period of the Thirty Years' War. She and her children pull a wagon filled with odds and ends across the European battlefields, selling to and buying from both sides and trying to balance their commercial gains with the losses caused by the war. The latter include one of Mother Courage's children after the other, until she has lost them all. She maintains the courage which gives her her nickname till the end but never really sees the connection between her suffering and the war. Sharp-tongued, good-hearted but sly and profit-conscious, she never learns! The audience, won to sympathy for her despite her shortcomings, does learn however!

The other of my two favourite plays now being shown is "The Life of Galileo Galilei" with Busch in the title role. The great Italian scientist is shown with all his human weaknesses, which include a love for good food and luxury and a fear of the Inquisition which is stronger than his principles. It is again a play where the audience comes to sympathise with the leading figure but never too fully to overlook his faults. This avoidance of plots with "goodies" and "baddies" helps make the plays complex and interesting. In the case of "Galilei", it helps Brecht make a case, even more valid today than when he wrote the play in 1938—39, for the need for scientists to feel a strong sense of responsibility towards society as well as towards their science alone.

Ernst Busch (left) as "Galileo"

I might mention here that, although the Berliner Ensemble usually has simple backdrops and scenery, they often use exciting and sometimes beautiful costumes. "Galileo" is one example of this; another is the "Caucasian Circle of Chalk" which is based on a Chinese parable somewhat similar to the Bible story of Solomon and the two mothers, and which employs a beautiful mixture of Far East and Near East colour and design in the settings, costumes and masks.

The music accompanying and illustrating the plays deserves more than a footnote here. Paul Dessau and Hanns Eisler, both of them famous well outside the borders of the German Democratic Republic, do the composing for the "Schiffbauerdamm" Theatre.

The plays with their compelling ideas, the distinguished acting, the music and the good taste in general are reasons why many visitors to Berlin, as soon as they arrive, try to get one of the 727 tickets for the evening performance of the Berliner Ensemble even before they try to get a hotel room (and both are about equally hard to get).

Since the Berliner Ensemble specialises in the plays of Bertolt Brecht, I think it is fitting to quote from a speech he made in January 1956 at the Writers' Congress in Berlin in which he sums up his ideas of writing.

"To reject experiments means to be content with what is already accomplished, that is to say to lag behind. The representation of the new is not easy. It is a question of enthusiasm for the new, knowledge of dialectic, and in addition new artistic methods. The Socialist, realistic method of representation demands continuous training, changing and new formation. Above all, it must be militant. And as a fighter it demands all weapons, ever better weapons, ever new weapons."

MISTER PUNCH OF LONDON WRITES "OPEN LETTER" TO WEST GERMAN PRESS

Gentlefolk, — Dr. Adenauer is too sweeping in his accusations that the British press is "wire-pulling" and working to impair Anglo-German relations. The term "British press" includes this magazine, and this magazine indulges neither in wire-pulling nor in activities calculated to damage the friendship of our two peoples. On the contrary, gentlefolk, we of this magazine are indefatigably pro-German and seldom miss an opportunity to work terms like Weltanschauung, Zeitgeist, Anschluss and Gesellschaft into our articles.

The other day one of your bombs, an unexploded missile, a relic from the last brief and unfortunate interruption in our lasting friendship, was discovered just outside our Waterloo (Southern Region) Station in London, and one of this magazine's reporters went along to take a look-see. Believe us, friends, that the whole incident — which included the closing down of all rail traffic for some hours — was received with the greatest good humour by all concerned. Our reporter said that onlookers were most impressed by the size of the missile and expressed keen admiration, in general terms,

"If Dr Adenauer wasn't so touchy I would say it was German measles."

for the skill and craftsmanship of the German workman — even to admitting that the odd faulty fuse proves nothing one way or the other. One passer-by remarked that, the conflict being over, the bomb was legally the property of your Government and should be returned to you to be melted down as scrap for your growing shipping industry. And this comment was quickly taken up by others of like mind with suggestions about various methods of freighting the thing back to you.

Dr. Adenauer would have had less to say about wire-pullers had he been present on this interesting occasion . . .

Dr. Adenauer we admire. He has done great things for Germany, and it is a pity, as he nears the end of his term of office, that he should abuse all sections of the British press as wire-pullers and trouble-shooters.

Even as we write (to the ineffably beautiful music of your Wagner's Meistersinger) there is a report that another unexploded bomb has been unearthed in Dorset. And this one, it is rumoured, was dropped from one of your glorious Zeppelins way back in 1917. There's a good laugh in that for all of us, eh?

(Condensed from an article by Bernard Hollowood in "Punch", April 22nd)

W. GERMAN PAPERS BASH BRITAIN

Some sections of the West German press are continuing the policy of "bashing Britain" launched by West German Chancellor Konrad Adenauer in a TV talk on April 8th.

On April 21st the "Koelnische Rundschau", generally regarded as Chancellor Adenauer's private mouthpiece, quoted with approval Bismarck's saying: "The English are easy to fool, because of their national vanity and ignorance", and continued:

"It was a silly idea of Harold Macmillan to journey to Moscow without consulting with Washington, Paris and Bonn. As a result he had to be whistled back afterwards by his allies... Now that he has done penance, we must look for the root over which he stumbled... The difference between his ideas and the ideas of his allies are not differences in aim, but differences in the evaluation of the enemy. In this respect Macmillan is really a new edition of Neville Chamberlain... But now Macmillan has come to earth again after his flight in the clouds, and we must hope that the conference will be spared this time the surprises sprung last time by Eden."

Two days later, on April 23rd, the West Berlin "Tag", a newspaper which is also very near to Chancellor Adenauer, criticised Sir William Haley, editor of the "Times", as a "weak spot" in the western front.

On April 22nd, Sir William had had a two-hour conversation with Walter Ulbricht, First Secretary of the Socialist Unity Party, in East Berlin. Commenting on this fact in a very intemperately worded leading article, the "Tag" stated:

"We cannot recall that much more important representatives of Communist states, such as Gomulka in Poland or Tito in Yugoslavia, have been honoured in the past few years by visits from Mr Haley. Whatever Mr Haley may have learned from Ulbricht, we believe he could have discovered more easily and cheaply by taking out a subscription to 'Neues Deutschland' (central organ of the Socialist Unity Party). Then he, and we, would have been spared the impression of a 'weak spot' at this moment."

People's Chamber Delegation in Asia

The Indian and Ceylonese Prime Ministers received the members of a delegation from the People's Chamber of the German Democratic Republic at present visiting Asia.

Indian Prime Minister Nehru received the delegation on April 12th, and Ceylonese Prime Minister Solomon Bandaranaike received the delegation on April 20th. The delegation is headed by Dr Johannes Dieckmann, Liberal Democratic Chairman of the People's Chamber, and Hermann Matern of the Socialist Unity Party, the Vice-Chairman of the People's Chamber. The delegation is also scheduled to visit North Viet Nam, China, North Korea and Mongolia.

GUEST NOTEBOOK

By Allen Mann

Film-lovers waited in long lines at East Berlin's Babylon Theatre last week, and Union Jacks fluttered gracefully if not too accurately over their heads. (It seems that only the British and the Americans themselves can make their respective flags perfectly accurately, and nowadays even the Americans are faltering badly with their changing banner.) But the occasion was a very good one — the first "Week of British Films" to be held in Democratic Germany. British films have been shown before but not too often, and here were "seven at a blow" which will soon circulate through all the cinema theatres here. It was a sort of return gesture for the week of German DEFA films in London last winter. And just as then, a group of film personalities accompanied the films.

Director Anthony Asquith, whose "Importance of Being Earnest" was the first film shown, surprised the opening-night audience by making a nice little speech in excellent German. The audience, for their part, surprised the British visitors by understanding the Oscar Wilde period piece so well that they laughed at all the right places (although this film was in English without titles), thus proving that the allegedly dry British humour and the allegedly heavy German humour are not so far apart after all. As Actor Basil Sydney said, "If we can laugh together, why shouldn't we be able to live together?"

There were more laughs at the visitors' press conference. Alfie Bass, a leading actor in "The Lavender Hill Mob" (which was a favourite with the Berlin audiences), used the occasion to josh J. Arthur Rank's press officer Geoffrey Heal about his own good connections with TV, to tell how his poor wife had asked him in tears if he thought he'd ever return "from behind the iron curtain", and finally to climb onto his chair with one foot on the table for a soap-box speech, half in English, half in German and all in fun. It was quite a change from the usual stodgy atmosphere of press conferences here and everyone loved it except perhaps the poor interpreter, who couldn't quite keep up with Alfie Bass.

The guests also spoke of their impressions of the DEFA film studio here, of Berlin and Dresden and other places they had visited. The prevailing feeling was one of friendship and hope for closer relations in future — more film exchanges, perhaps the loan of an actor or actress occasionally and perhaps even a co-production some day.

One side-light of the film-week was also amusing. All foreign films here, which make up a large part of the film-fare, are dubbed into German (usually quite well). But the first film in the series, as I have said, was in English, so the theatre had a tape recording in German made (with one woman speaking all parts) and started to play it loudly during the film, so loudly in fact that no-one could hear the actors and actresses. The audience, who had expected to see the film in English, got angrier and angrier. After loud trampling had brought no results, they began to shout; near me a very professorial but stentorian voice cried out, "Turn that frightful translation off at once!" That seems to have done the trick — they turned it off. And at the press conference, the film theatre people promised to show these films in future not only in German but also in certain special theatres in the original English. This would be especially welcome in the case of the Shakespeare films ("Hamlet", "Romeo and Juliet" and "Richard III") which lose a lot in the dubbing. As for the films, they were in general well received here. Especially the comedies, for this is one kind of film which the DEFA studios have still not really learned to make. But I could have wished for at least one film which showed a bit of British life today with its joys and problems. I hope the film week results will increase the chances of seeing more and better films.

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Some other British guests will soon arrive in Berlin — but this time for the sport event of the year — the international Peace Bicycle Race. This event monopolises all attention in Poland, Democratic Germany and Czechoslovakia every year in May — it will probably put the Foreign Ministers' Conference a bit in the shadows for a few days. The race usually runs from Prague to Warsaw or vice versa with Berlin in the middle; this year Berlin will be the starting point, however, and banners and decorations are already going up.

The teams include old faithfuls like France, Britain, Belgium and Denmark and all the socialist countries of Europe (except little Albania); two other little countries will be racing this year, however — Luxembourg and tiny Monaco (which really seems determined to stay in the news somehow). Italy, Holland, Switzerland and Finland will also be represented.

This year's race will include a little novelty for the young hopeful cyclists between 14 and 18, at least for those in Democratic Germany. Elimination contests in all parts of the country have weeded out six groups of thirty youngsters, none of whom have ever taken part in a public race. When the big Peace Race come to the stretch of road allotted to each group of thirty, the kids will dash off a couple of hours ahead of the real racers, and compete over a part of the day's run (for the youngsters 10 miles, for the real racers 70 to 130 miles). Each young winner will then be picked up by the Peace Race's motorised entourage and driven to the goal city of the day; there he will share in the ceremonies, be honoured and feted and given a prize, lodged and fed in the best hotel and then sent home the next day just as proud as if he had won the whole Peace Race.

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GERMAN REPORT will probably inform you of the results of the race, but this year nothing is very certain in May here. There is such a string of holidays falling in such a curious way, that all plans, whether for coal production or for publication dates, are rather wishes than certainties. This is because the German Democratic Republic celebrates both the old religious holidays and the modern, more political ones.

Take a look at your calendar. May Day is a Friday — no-one wants to work the half-day Saturday in such cases, and usually people work a few extra hours sometime to make up for missed Saturdays. But then comes May 7th — Ascension Day, and also a legal holiday — closely followed by May 8th, which is Liberation Day (when Germany was freed from the nazis). These are on a Thursday and Friday, and who wants to work on a Saturday then!

Just to complicate things a little more, the following weekend is Whitsuntide, with Monday a holiday. All economic planners are tearing their hair, GERMAN REPORT is worrying about printer's deadlines (particularly with the Foreign Ministers' Conference in mid-May) and everybody else is hoping for nice weather.

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